

GROUND COVER

NEWS AND SOLUTIONS FROM THE GROUND UP

MAY 2012 VOLUME THREE ISSUE FIVE

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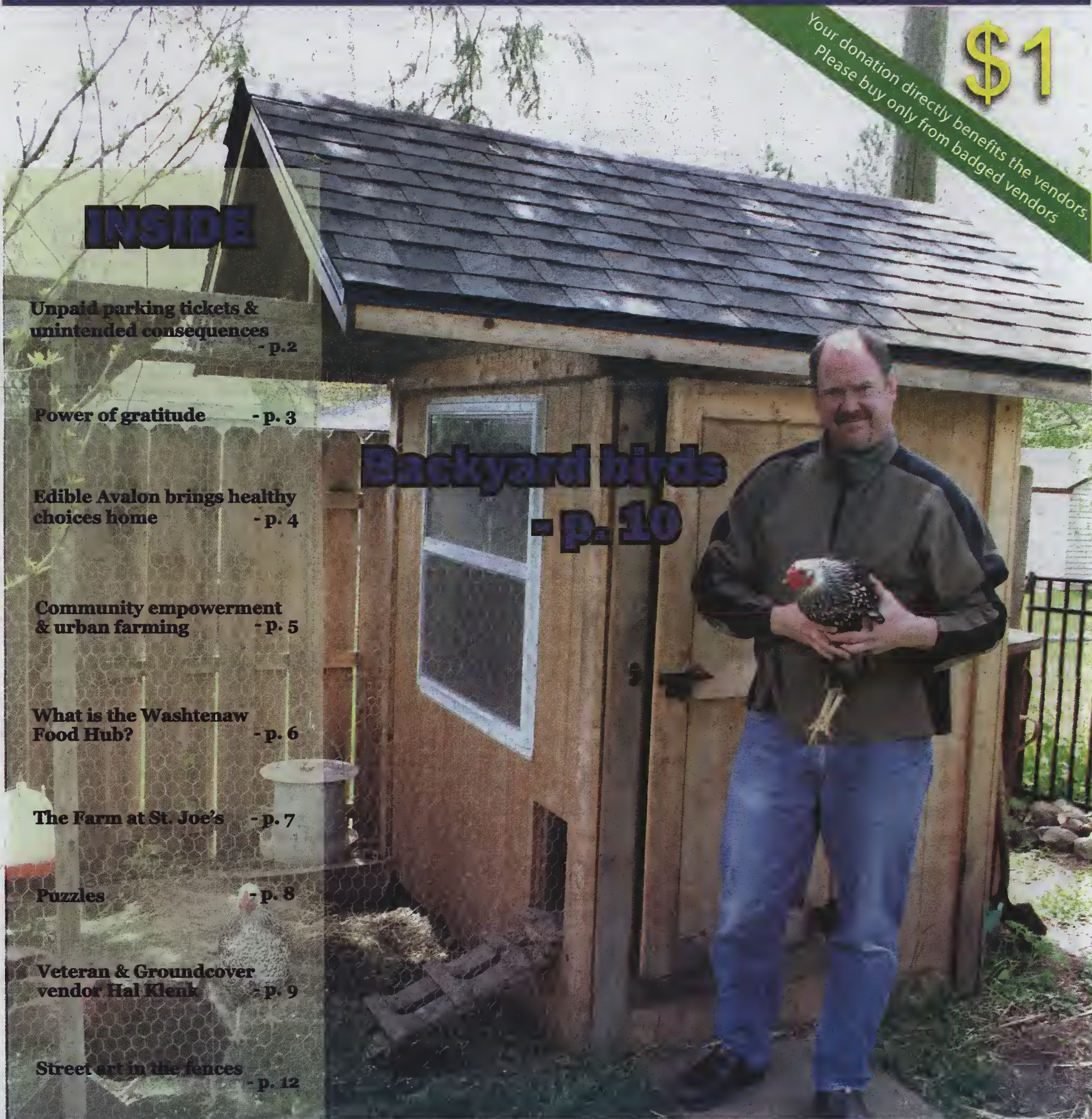
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Here we go again: challenges in the food and transportation systems



by Susan Beckett
Publisher

Food

As we look at developments in Washtenaw County's local food production, processing and distribution, the food supports for those most at-risk of food insecurity are under attack again. Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits, formerly known as food stamps, are a federal program and subject to control by Congress. According to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, the 2,032,000 Michigan residents who receive food stamps would see a \$5.3 million annual reduction if House Budget Committee Chairman Paul Ryan's budget plan to cut SNAP by \$133.5 billion, more than 17 percent over

the next ten years is enacted. Another \$33 billion recently slashed from the Agriculture budget as part of budget reconciliation could result in further cuts to nutrition programs.

Further, the Ryan plan calls for changing food stamp funding to a block grant model. With states receiving a fixed SNAP amount, recessions will leave cash-strapped states unable to respond to increased demand at the times when families are most vulnerable. Many folks who could not get cash assistance when their hours were cut in this recession were able to hang on to their place to live because food assistance allowed them to reallocate funds to other necessities.

No federal program, except unemployment insurance, responds better to changing economic conditions than SNAP. This was especially evident in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. In the weeks following the disaster, the program gave over \$500 million in food assistance to more than 1.2 million Katrina survivors, without the need for congressional action. Overall, the program was able to accommodate an increase of over 4 million participants between August and November of 2005. SNAP is seen as one of the few successes in federal responsiveness during the 2005 hurricanes.

71 percent of those participating in SNAP receive benefits for two years or less. Half of all new recipients stay on the program for no more than six months, and 57 percent end participation within one year. The program increases the nutritional value of a typical low-income household's home food supplies by 20 to 40 percent. SNAP households participating in the program, on average, spend more on food and acquire more food than low-income non-participating households, according to the Food Research and Action Center.

Concern over the occasional lottery winner who has not lost SNAP benefits should not distract attention from the millions of families who depend

on these benefits for bare necessities. Consider that all of the big grocery retailers prepare for an onslaught of baby formula sales at the start of the month when SNAP cards are replenished. (Over half of all SNAP recipients are children.) Food pantries and community meals see a significant rise in patronage near the end of the month when people's SNAP cards have been depleted.

SNAP benefits enable people with chronic, debilitating conditions to buy some of the high-cost, nutritional items like fresh fruits and vegetables that their doctors recommend to help control diabetes and immune system disorders. The "double up" coupons at farmer's markets spur local produce sales as well as allowing SNAP beneficiaries to buy two dollars worth of produce for every dollar of SNAP benefits. That program was added to the Farm Bill when it was renewed five years ago and will resume in June, at least for this year.

Senator Debbie Stabenow, chair of the Senate Agriculture Committee, could play a big role in tempering cuts enacted by the House of Representatives. Funding for SNAP is guided by the Farm Bill, authored by members of the House and Senate Agriculture Committees every five years. A compromise of differences between the House and Senate versions of the bill must be agreed upon and passed by both houses in order for a new law to take effect. The current Farm Bill expires in December of 2012.

Transportation

Mere months after repealing driver responsibility fees, the Michigan legislature passed a law stating that motorists with at least three unpaid parking tickets could be blocked from renewing their driver's licenses. Starting May 16, local governments can report to the Secretary of State's office any motorist with at least three overdue parking tickets, preventing license renewal. One has to wonder, how thorough will those local governments be at reporting when some or all of the

outstanding tickets have been paid – and has the state government found yet another way to criminalize poverty?

Cars are increasingly the shelter option of last resort for economically marginalized families and individuals. Urban areas offer the free meals and health care clinics crucial to the survival of the very poor, but free and low-cost parking are scant to non-existent. Parking tickets will ensue when cash is scarcest.

Even those lucky enough to find parking in neighborhoods must move their cars periodically to comply with parking regulations. When cars break down and the owners can't afford to have them towed or repaired, they are repeatedly ticketed until the cars are impounded and their last vestige of shelter disappears.

If they have not yet applied for benefits like Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) or food stamps, they will not be able to do so until they have a legal state-issued identification card, which for most people is a driver's license. The same applies to voting.

To get a standard state ID card, an individual must get to a Secretary of State office and provide proof of citizenship or legal residency, proof of a valid social security number or a letter of ineligibility from the Social Service Administration, and ten dollars. The documents are often harder to provide than the money, since they were likely towed away with the car, buried in a storage facility, or discarded by a landlord when the family was evicted. Getting replacements, especially without a mailing address, is a nightmare for someone with limited funds and means of communication.

Perhaps once aware of the unintended consequences of this new procedure, those in Lansing will stop it before it starts, or at least make an exception for people who can document financial distress.

GROUNDCOVER NEWS MISSION:

Groundcover News exists to create opportunity and a voice for low-income people while taking action to end homelessness and poverty.

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Any way you say it



by Rev. Dr. Martha Brunell
Pastor, Bethlehem United Church of Christ

I usually remember to carry reusable shopping bags with me. But sometimes, especially when I make a handful of unexpected purchases in a convenience store at the gas station, I don't have a reusable bag on my arm and request one of the plastic ones they provide. My favorite plastic shopping bag is one that has "thank you" printed on it in a number of languages. Any way one says it, in whatever language, the message is the same. That bag always makes me smile. Who hasn't heard that old saying, "It is better to give than to receive." That could be, but I'm not sure. The reality is that givers need receivers. Receivers who remember to respond with a "thank you" are even better.

Meister Eckhart, a 14th-century Christian mystic, once uttered that if we only have one prayer to say, that prayer should be "thank you." In the spirit of my favorite plastic bags and Meister Eckhart's wisdom, I want to share what is on my "thank you" list to Groundcover.

- Thank you for several years of steady and persistent work in getting Groundcover started. I was once the co-founder of a non-profit and worked for several others in their young years. The early years are challenging; there is so much to learn and do.
- Thank you for a great name. I was recently walking in an arboretum in Battle Creek on a beautiful pathway. That peaceful pathway is lined with a variety of perennials. In several places, the growth of the groundcover is spilling over into the pathway. That groundcover brought to mind our Groundcover and all its potential for spreading growth.
- Thank you for creating and composing a newspaper we can hold in our hands. Some of us will never tire of having a newspaper we can fold and tuck under our arms.
- Thank you to vendors who stand out in all sorts of weather, who scout out the best corners for sales, who are creative in how to transport papers around,

and who are willing to start over again and build a new foundation. You are an inspiration.

- Thank you for a love of the written word and for writing workshops that help writers find their voices and communicate them well.
- Thank you for your presence in office space at Bethlehem. You are our teachers about a complicated and pervasive issue as we get to know one another and hear your stories.
- Thank you for bringing a diverse and growing community of people together, across the county and beyond. We saw that wondrous diversity at a benefit concert for Groundcover back in the winter.

- Thank you for biting off a small piece of a large issue. It is easy to become paralyzed and not do anything when a question or problem like homelessness appears too big or demanding.

These are a few items on my Groundcover thank you list. Do you have others that you might add? A regular practice of gratitude is good for our spirits and for the greater spirit that animates and connects us. If you are interested in gratitude resources, check out www.Gratefulness.org.

Thank you all,
Dr. Martha Brunell



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Bethlehem Church is home for the Groundcover Office

Sundays:

8:30 am and 10:00 am ~ Worship
10:00 am ~ Church School

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May 28 ~ Memorial Day
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Edible Avalon: healthy choices made easier

by William Lopez
Groundcover Contributor

Currently, we see issues related to weight, diet, and obesity framed as individual choice versus individual choice. At the simplest level, everyone *chooses* what goes in to his or her own body. One can choose to eat healthily, eating fruits and vegetables and limiting intake of sugar and fat. She can choose to drink 64 ounces of water a day, or live off of Coke and Dr. Pepper. He can choose to put more or fewer calories into his body than necessary. And while it is certainly true that the hand that feeds you is your own, the reality is, the foods you choose come from a set of options limited by a number of factors beyond an individual's control that can make eating healthy difficult.

This is where community responsibility comes into play. The individual responsibility argument breaks down when there are no grocery stores nearby, and corner stores sell only alcohol and chips. When surrounded by fast food restaurants, \$5 can go a long way, much more quickly, in feeding the feisty children coming home from school. Thus, as a community and society, it's important that we provide the opportunity for individuals to make healthy, empowering, *individual* choices about what they eat.

Edible Avalon is a great example of community action that leads to individual empowerment through food choice. Avalon Housing, Inc., is dedicated to maintaining supportive rental housing for residents of Washtenaw County with extremely low incomes. 324 units are located at 23 sites in the Ann Arbor area. The organization runs Edible Avalon, which brings community organic gardening to many of the Avalon Housing sites. The program maintains a strong educational component, with classes on cooking, food preservation, nutrition, and healthy eating habits. A strong contingent of volunteers contributes gardening skills to help grow over 3,200 pounds of fresh produce for residents! Edible Avalon runs an incredible youth program called the "Program in

Sustainable Agriculture and Food Equity," in which students in grades K-8 learn about garden ecosystems and delve into questions about food sustainability and equity.

My daughter and I volunteered with Edible Avalon about a year ago. We started the day by sorting seeds, separating them and dividing them into packets that then went to families in Avalon Housing. Each family received numerous packets with varieties of seeds that would allow them to plant vegetables in their community gardens. When we finished, we went outside to do the same with compost, separating it and gardening soil into usable volumes for different-sized gardens.

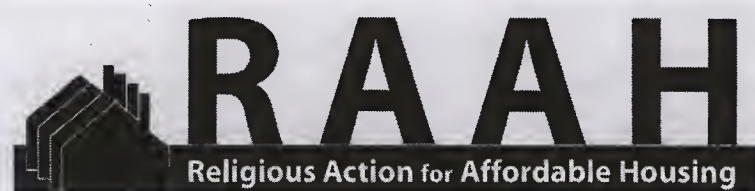
The tasks themselves were enjoyable (especially for a kid getting to play in the dirt!), but what was most striking was Edible Avalon's focus on empowering the community through the provision of food. In environments in which it is difficult to find healthy foods, why not grow your own? With a garden in your own back yard, it's difficult *not* to choose the delicious vegetables grown with your own two hands.

Edible Avalon provides a great answer to the individual versus community responsibility debate surrounding diet, weight, obesity, and health: make the healthy choice the easy choice. If we provide programs that allow us to



grow our own foods – that allow us, as individuals, to choose what we eat – then we will make healthy choices.

I invite you to support Edible Avalon with both your time and personal donations. They are always looking for volunteers, and opportunities can be found on their website at www.avalonhousing.org/edible-avalon, or by emailing their volunteer coordinator, Jude Walton, at jwalton@avalonhousing.org. And of course, donations of gardening supplies, such as nails and screws, work gloves, watering cans, and hand pruners, in addition to supplies for move-in kits for residence (sheets, cleaning supplies, dish soap, laundry detergent) are always welcome.



Come learn about what local religious congregations are doing to address the need for affordable housing in Washtenaw County.

RAAH's Annual Meeting

Date: Thursday, June 21, 2012

Time: 6:30 pm—refreshments
7:00-8:00 pm—program

Place: St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church
2250 E. Stadium Blvd., Ann Arbor

Special Guest Speaker: Jennifer Hall,
Executive Director of the Ann Arbor Housing Commission

For more information visit RAAH.org



Join us at our upcoming volunteer meeting where we will set the course for Groundcover's summer issues and initiatives. May 22, 7 p.m., Bethlehem United Church of Christ, 423 S. 4th Ave, Ann Arbor. Email contact@groundcovernews.com or call 734-972-0926 for more information.

Cultivating food and justice through urban farming

by Greg Hoffman
Groundcover Social Work Intern

Detroit

Urban farming is growing in popularity in the City of Detroit and other parts of Southeast Michigan, as an intervention strategy to eliminate barriers to food access. Lack of access to fresh, healthy food is a social problem that disproportionately affects low-income individuals in urban areas.

Without adequate transportation options, or stores that offer healthy, fresh food, many low-income individuals and families only have access to highly processed food options or fast food. This is a contributing factor to Michigan's status as one of the most obese states in the nation, and the increasingly high rates of nutrition-related diseases, such as heart disease and diabetes.

Urban farming is seen as an innovative method to address food access on the community level. Interestingly, one of society's oldest tools provides a path for healthy living in the future. In many areas throughout Michigan, local nonprofits and municipal governments are working to promote urban farming through community education and training programs to empower residents to take a proactive role in their own health, and that of their community members.

The issue has even made it to the state legislature as they work to decide whether or not the City of Detroit should receive an exemption from the Michigan Right to Farm Act of 1981.

This law, introduced as a way to protect farmers from nuisance lawsuits as suburban sprawl crept further north of Detroit city limits, now stands as a barrier for many of the organizations in Detroit that are engaged in coordinated, large-scale urban farming projects in the city of Detroit. Because the City does not have the autonomy to create regulations on urban farming projects, the zoning commission has been reluctant to re-zone residential and commercial areas for agricultural use. The City's reluctance is based on the design of the Right to Farm Act, which supersedes any local farming ordinance, and therefore could conceivably lead to chicken farms or tractor use a few blocks off Woodward Avenue – something that many residents may seriously dislike. If Detroit is granted an exemption from the Right to Farm Act, which is designed as an exemption for cities with populations exceeding 600,000 residents, then Detroit would be able to write its own urban farming ordinance and could begin to rezone the more than 4,800 acres of vacant land owned by the City for agricultural uses.

If passed, the exemption would allow both grassroots organizations and privately-owned companies to initiate projects within the city that focus on green space and growing food within city limits. Some of the major players in Detroit's urban farming movement are the Detroit Food Policy Council (DFPC) and Hantz Farms. The DFPC is a collaborative group of city government officials, nonprofit organizers and officers, commercial food industry representatives,

and education experts. Acting as a coordinator for many of the urban farming and farmers' market initiatives in Detroit, the DFPC is also responsible for the publication of the Detroit Food Systems Annual Report. This community resource provides statistics, maps, and locations that illustrate the strengths of community-driven interventions to promote food justice in Detroit, but also highlights the progress that still needs to be achieved to ensure healthy and fresh food access for Detroit residents. The DFPC is currently organizing the Powering Up the Local Food System Summit, a two-day education summit with trainings and demonstrations. This event will be held May 18-19 at the HOPE Conference Center at 1400 Oakman Blvd., Detroit, MI 48238. More information is available on the DFPC website at www.detroitfoodpolicycouncil.net.

Hantz Farms is a privately-owned business, owned by John Hantz, the president and CEO of Hantz Financial, which has an office in Ann Arbor. Hantz Farms hopes to open a large-scale farm network in Detroit, beginning with planting fruit and hardwood trees on their phase-one site in Detroit's lower east side. This nearly 70-acre parcel of land will serve as the pilot program for Hantz Farms, which hopes to serve as a model for urban farming worldwide. Their website, www.hantzfarmsdetroit.com, features many videos and descriptions of their programs in progress, and those they hope to implement in the future.

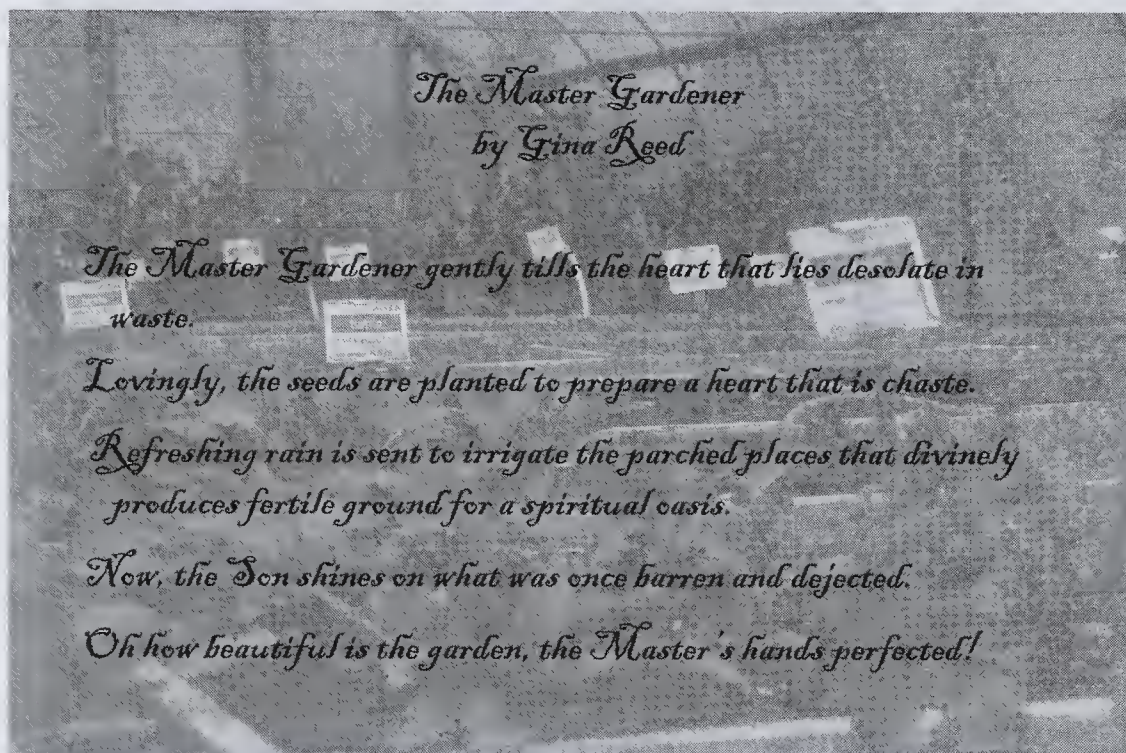
Ypsilanti & Growing Hope

These innovative interventions for urban renewal are also being used effectively more locally in Washtenaw County through the work of organizations such as Growing Hope, featured in Groundcover's inaugural issue. This local nonprofit has used gardening and other fresh food programs since 2003 not only to promote healthy nutrition habits, but also as a tool for empowering the Ypsilanti community through engagement, relationship building, and social justice support. Through partnerships with other nonprofit, education, and municipal organizations,

Growing Hope has become an increasingly recognized force in the movement for healthy food access in Ypsilanti. Growing Hope coordinates the Downtown Ypsilanti Farmers' Market, and this year marks the seventh season the organization has done so successfully. Under the leadership of Executive Director Amanda Edmonds and its dedicated staff, Growing Hope has evolved into a beacon for green urban living in Southeast Michigan, not only a growing trend in urban areas, but a vital component of sustainability and community empowerment that is so essential in towns like Ypsilanti and Detroit that have spent years trying to rebound from industrial decay and the negative impacts of outsourcing and globalization.

In 2007, the Growing Hope organization purchased a tract of land on Michigan Ave. in Ypsilanti, just west of downtown. Since 2007, the site has been transformed into a dynamic, community-education resource with a focus on sustainable green living. One of the features of the Growing Hope Center at 922 West Michigan Ave. is an herb and vegetable garden where the staff and volunteers both grow food and conduct demonstrations to community members on gardening techniques. The site also features a 30-by-96-foot "hoophouse," which is an indoor growing facility that enables Growing Hope to cultivate food year-round. The newest feature of the Growing Hope site is the office and classroom that resides in a renovated 1931 home on the property. This space will serve as a model "green" office-space, a commercial kitchen and training facility, and location for community education classes to help facilitate affordable, environmentally-conscious lifestyles in the Ypsilanti community.

The Growing Hope Center will be formally dedicated and hold a Grand Opening on May 5 to formally introduce the new space to the public. Other upcoming events include the Ypsilanti Garden Fair. This event will be held at the Michigan Ave location from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Saturday, May 12. The Fair includes demonstrations, food and goods sales from local growers and businesses, and free children's events, and is being held in tandem with the Growing Hope Center's Annual Plant Sale. This sale will feature various plants, growing starter kits, raised-bed kits and supplies, and Growing Hope merchandise. More information on both events is available on Growing Hope's website at www.growinghope.net.



Washtenaw Food Hub

by Susan Beckett
Publisher

The Washtenaw Food Hub seems to be as much about building community as it is about supplying locally produced foods. Still in its infancy as a physical space, there is a well developed network of farmers, artisans and consumers eager for it to develop. Geared toward supporting local agri-businesses and community involvement, The Washtenaw Food Hub mirrors the newest trend in agriculture.

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) promotes food hubs and defines them as centrally located facilities with a business management structure which integrate food production and distribution, farmer services, agricultural training and community involvement to help local farming and local food producers thrive in the community.

The Washtenaw Food Hub will work closely with local farmers and distributors to provide the community with Michigan-grown food. They aim to attract families along with retail and wholesale customers. The food hub will also offer organic supplies and services to farmers, workshops in local food preparation, donations to local food banks and annual summer internships.

One of the most promising facets of the food hub is making processing equipment available to a collective of small farmers, opening up the opportunity to make local food available to institutional kitchens and

others who require the convenience of receiving their vegetables already cleaned and chopped. Because the target food destinations will be local, the greens or vegetables can be packed in large, re-usable containers.

Richard Andres of Tantré Farms has been dreaming of a local food hub since he encountered one in Burlington, Vermont 20 years ago. When the perfect piece of land went on the market, he snatched it up, even though he does not intend to be the owner. The vision is for the land to be owned by a Limited Liability Corporation whose purpose is furthering local agriculture, and for it to be leased and managed as a cooperative.

A panoply of local players and movements are contributing to the forward-movement of the food hub. Some, including Slow Food, are creating more demand. The supply side includes the many dedicated farmers and Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) shareholders that developed the small farms and hoop houses that extended the growing season, making it feasible for people to eat locally grown greens year-round. Volunteers, guest chefs and diners at the Selma Café have made possible the financing of hoop houses to boost four-season production for local growers. The Farmer Fund, a microcredit system for financing hoop houses, is backed by deposits from Selma Café and other community supporters and administered by University Bank of Ann Arbor. Selma Café volunteers have also come out to put up over 30 hoop houses for area farmers over the last three years.

see FOOD HUB, page 11

Ramps and Fiddlehead Ferns

by Susan Beckett

The warm weather sent the ramps (a garlicky wild leek) shooting out of the ground early this year. They grow wild in moist woodlands but can be found at Farmer's Markets and natural food stores. Substitute for leeks or scallions in your favorite recipes or simply fry them with your morning eggs.

The recipe below pairs ramps and another wild spring vegetable: fiddlehead ferns. These are tightly-coiled, as-yet-unwrapped fern leaves, presenting as a spiral and with a brown papery cover. Ostrich Ferns are a particularly good source of fiddleheads. Snap fiddleheads off at the base of the plant. These, too, can be found in local markets.

Fiddlehead Ferns and Ramp Casserole

Ingredients:

20 fiddleheads per person
3 ramps per person

1 T melted butter per person
1 T olive oil per person
Seasoned breadcrumbs

Directions:

Wash bulbs and remove dirt. Cut bulbs into 1/2" pieces; discard green stalks or save for salads or stews. Boil pieces 3 minutes, drain, add more water, boil a few more minutes until tender. Drain, put in a shallow casserole dish with butter and oil.

While bulbs cook, rub fiddleheads between fingers to remove brown coating. Rinse, steam for 10 minutes or boil gently 5 minutes or until tender but not mushy. Drain, add to casserole dish, tossing gently with ramps in the butter and oil. Salt to taste.

Top with seasoned breadcrumbs and broil one minute or until breadcrumbs are browned.



Jane Pacheko on the porch of the Washtenaw Food Hub farm store where Lunasa customers will pick up their food.



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St. Joe's tackles the challenge of farming

by Colleen Huysman
Groundcover Contributor

"If we are encouraging others to eat well, it is important for people to see where food comes from," claimed Dan Bair, the St. Joseph Mercy Hospital (St. Joe's) farmer. The Farm at St. Joe's, started two years ago under Bair's supervision, is located on the southeast corner of the hospital grounds.

"There have been many changes with the hospital food since the farm started. I can't say that the farm has been a catalyst, but maybe it has," Bair said.

The Farm at St. Joe's started with the intention of producing food to put into patient meals. While St. Joseph's Hospital has started to buy some food from the farm for patient meals, Bair said that this summer the Farm will make a more concerted effort to harvest food that the hospital will use.

"It's challenging to make changes at the hospital, work together and figure out what we need to do," Bair said. He will focus on increasing the volume of certain produce that the cafeteria staff can use on the menu this summer. Instead of growing an overall variety of produce, Bair said he will grow certain crops for them to use: tomatoes, green and red bell peppers, basil, parsley, garlic, kale and some other herbs.

Bair did not grow up farming, but after graduating from the University of Michigan and completing a year of AmeriCorps Vista with Growing Hope in Ypsilanti, he started planning with the hospital staff to start the farm.

The Farm at St. Joe's will expand to include a community garden this summer as part of the hospital's initiative to promote healthy eating among hospital staff and patients. Cardiothoracic nurse Ann Schneider started the community gardens at St.

Joe's and coordinates the gardeners.

"A self-maintained garden is truly a cornerstone of healthy eating," Schneider said. "Food you've grown yourself reduces grocery bills, making harvesting a no-brainer. Introducing [fresh] vegetables into meals is easier, too, because they taste better. Getting outdoors and having an excuse to work in the sun is wonderful for stress reduction. Eating foods that have been recently harvested are most nutritious.

"Community gardens are a great way to get to know one another on a level playing field, and get in touch with more traditional practices. I love the idea of leaving a hectic day at work behind and sharing an evening outdoors with fellow gardeners. The gardens at St. Joseph Mercy Hospital are special, though. This is quite forward-thinking of St. Joe's, to encourage employees to walk the beautiful nature trails snaking behind the campus, shop a farmer's market of produce grown on-site, and now a community-building garden. The more The Farm initiative grows at the hospital, the more pride I have in where I work," Schneider said.

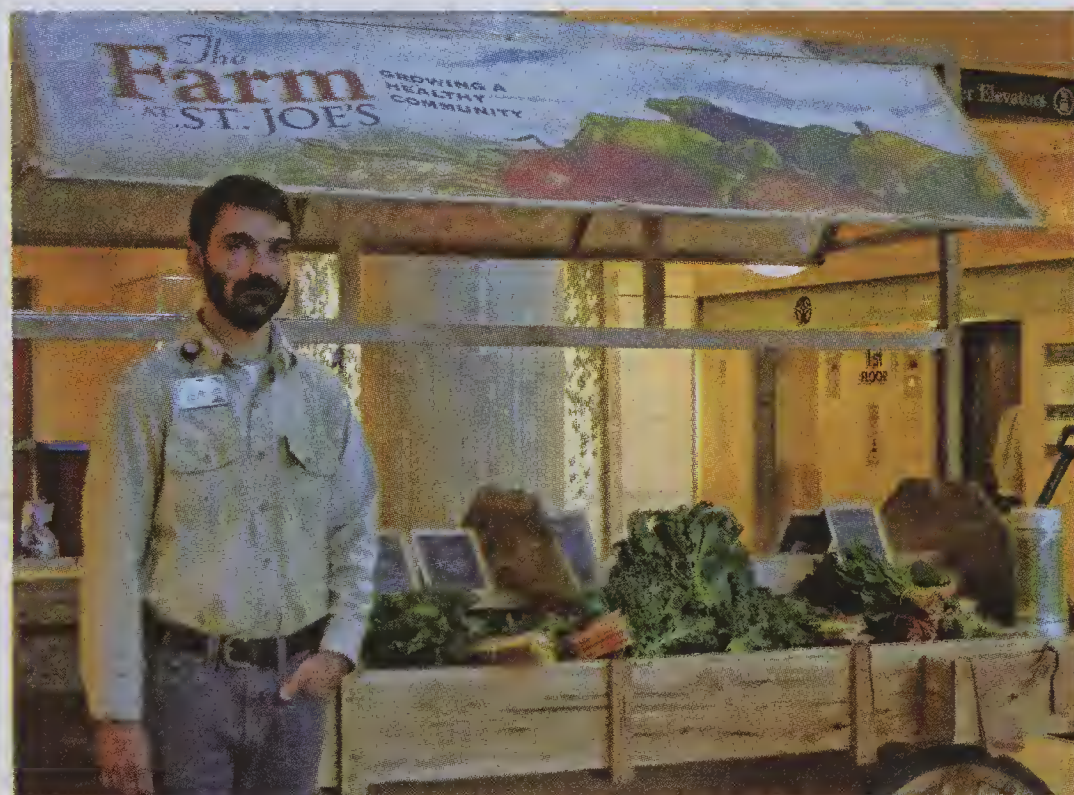
The community garden will give 12 employees and their families and friends the opportunity to learn from Bair and have their own 10-by-15-foot plot of land to garden organically. Plots rent for \$75 a year and are located on the 15-acre farm at St. Joseph Mercy Hospital where soil integrity has already been improved.

"Growing food is for everyone. When we give people the opportunity to see

food growing, we see a transformative impact on their physical and mental health. There is evidence to suggest that if people are growing their own food, they are more likely to be healthier," Bair said. Plot owners will be responsible for the start-up, maintenance and upkeep of the plot. He said most of the plots are already sold.

Bair sets up a farmer's market during lunch time every Wednesday at St. Joseph's Hospital for staff, visitors and patients to buy fresh produce. Depending on the time of year, Bair brings in \$200-500. Bair said that last year there was typically leftover produce, but not this year. On Wednesday, April 18, he sold out in an hour. In addition to setting up the produce to sell, Bair compiles recipe cards to encourage people to try new items, especially cooking greens such as kale, Swiss chard and collard greens.

"It's the best when people take a



Farmer Dan Bair with produce grown at St. Joe's Farm for sale in the hospital's main lobby.

recipe, try it and come back for the same produce the next week. That's the best. It makes me so happy," Bair said. Bair also posts recipes on the Farm at St. Joe's blog.

When there is leftover produce, Bair donates the harvest to Food Gatherers. So far, he has donated over 2500 lbs. of food. Food Gatherers has been actively building more partnerships across the community to seek fresh produce and offer it to the organizations they work with. Bair said that giving the food donations falls under the hospital's social justice mission.

The Farm is self-sustaining and even though it is not a certified organic farm, Bair said he uses all organic farming techniques. In addition to the vegetable production, the farm has a large hayfield, hoop houses and beehives that are maintained by the Ypsilanti Co-op.

While Bair is in charge of vegetable production, handling the planting, watering, weeding and transplanting, he regularly has volunteers help out. Recently several high school student groups have been working with him. Over the summer, he will see more volunteer groups from different hospital departments, community groups and student organizations. The Farm also partners with the University of Michigan School of Public Health to offer a full-time farm rotation to dietetic students for two to four weeks.

If you are interested in volunteering, please call Dan Bair, at The Farm at St. Joe's at 734-712-4667 or email him at carefulfarmer@gmail.com.

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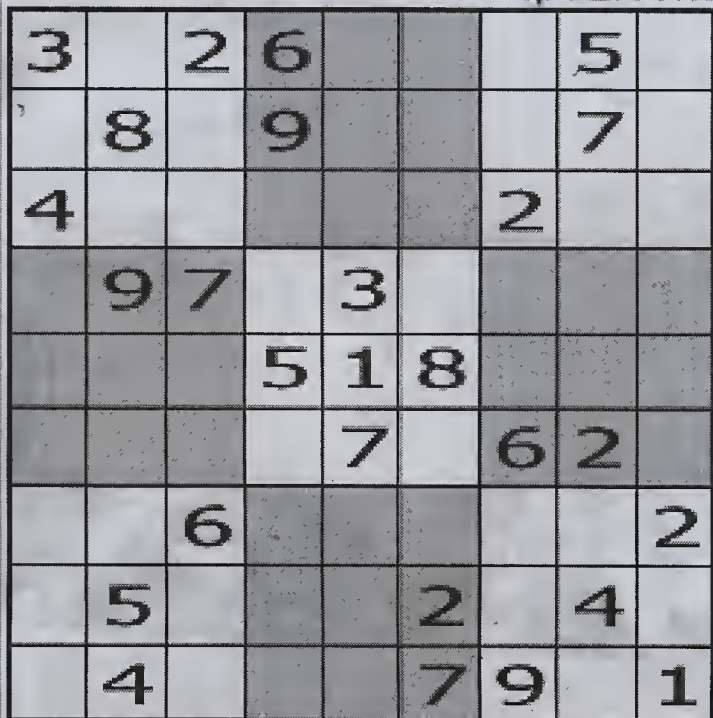
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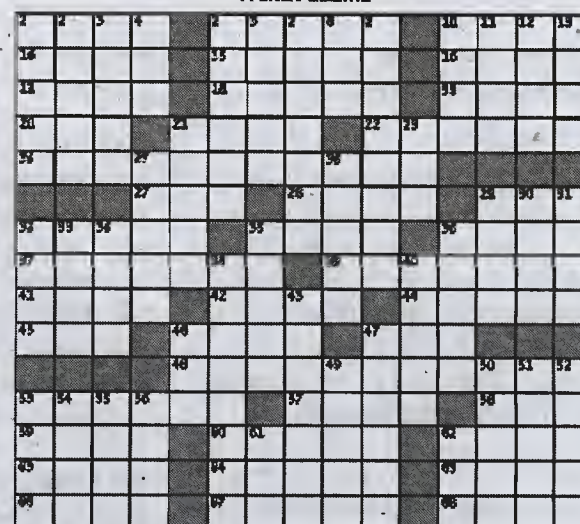


Fill in the squares so that each row, column, and 3-by-3 box contain the numbers 1 through 9.

- ACROSS**
- Cries
 - Tennessee county
 - Sphagnum
 - Exclude
 - Carta
 - Asian river
 - Artist Peter
 - Viscous substance
 - Volcanic emission
 - Volcanic emission
 - Mesopotamian sugar (abbr.)
 - Fried eggs
 - Vegetable stew
 - Cook's implement
 - Require
 - Pronoun
 - Esquimaux boat
 - Used vehicle, sold as new
 - Actor Bridges
 - Foremost
 - Release
 - New York river
 - Always
 - Duck
 - Soccer player Miyachi
 - Arthur Leon
 - Actress Southern
 - Beef tenderloin
 - Chocolate candy
 - Downpour
 - Plastic
 - Automobile manufacturer
 - Trade union
 - Newspaper item, for short
 - Very dry
 - Mimes
 - vera
 - Ice flakes
 - Excrete
 - Tear

- DOWN**
- Detection device
 - Stomach sections
 - Small boy
 - Animal's home
 - Russian military unit
 - Creek
 - Arthur Penn's mother

French Cuisine



- ACROSS**
- School in Asia (abbr.)
 - Layered pastry
 - Work animal
 - Verbal
 - Rescue
 - Thin strip
 - "these to be"
 - Club
 - In pieces
 - Monkey
 - Leader
 - Comfort
 - Region in Germany
 - Croissant
 - Thai, kickboxing
 - Factor
 - Tasmanian
 - Existence

- DOWN**
- Sweetened egg whites
 - Russian revolutionary
 - Organic chemical
 - Mysterious aircraft (abbr.)
 - Surrounded by
 - Asian river
 - Highborn
 - Pizza topping
 - Eminent
 - Supervisor
 - Accessible
 - Peter Ustinov role
 - Exhaled
 - School in Belgium (abbr.)
 - Rover's equipment

Puzzle by Jeff Richmond

Cryptoquote

"JQIFGPWZFIQC TD NXGTCXPTDF'D HXZ WB AICCTQA

ZWJ CW GPXQC X AXOLIQ"

- WODWQ DNWCC NXOL

Solutions on page 11

Groundcover Vendor Code

While Groundcover News is a nonprofit organization and newspaper vendors are considered contracted self-employers, we still have expectations of how vendors should conduct themselves while selling and representing the paper.

The following list is our Vendor Code of Conduct, which every vendor reads and signs before receiving a badge and papers. We request that if you discover a vendor violating any tenets of the Code, please contact us and provide as many details as possible. Our paper and our vendors should be positively impacting our County.

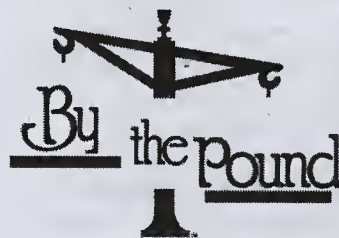
All vendors must agree to the following code of conduct:

- Groundcover News will be distributed for a voluntary donation of \$1. I agree not to ask for more than a dollar or solicit donations by any other means.
- I will only sell current issues of Groundcover News.
- I agree not to sell additional goods or products when selling the paper or to panhandle, including panhandling with only one paper.
- I will wear and display my badge when selling papers.
- I will only purchase the paper from Groundcover News Staff and will not sell to or buy papers from other Groundcover

News vendors, especially vendors who have been suspended or terminated.

- I agree to treat all customers, staff and other vendors respectfully. I will not "hard sell," threaten, harass or pressure customers, staff, or other vendors verbally or physically.
- I will not sell Groundcover News under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
- I understand that I am not a legal employee of Groundcover News but a contracted worker responsible for my own well-being and income.
- I understand that my badge is property of Groundcover News and will not deface it. I will present my badge when purchasing the papers.
- I agree to stay off private property when selling Groundcover News.
- I understand to refrain from selling on public buses, federal property or stores unless there is permission from the owner.
- I agree to stay at least one block away from another vendor. I will also abide by the Vendor corner policy.

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On my corner: Hal Klenk

by Susan Beckett

Hal Klenk started selling Groundcover a few months ago, but you may have recognize his curly silver hair from Vietnam Veterans Chapter 310, where he is very active. In part due to Hal's hard work, the Chapter is the largest in the United States, was honored for having the best newsletter two years in a row, and won the award for the best president more than once. The Chapter and Hal are now concentrating on how to transition the organization so it becomes a legacy for veterans of more recent wars.

The armed services have played significant roles throughout Hal's life. He joined ROTC in 1962 as a freshman at Eastern Kentucky University (EKU), where it was a mandatory course. He joined the Air Force in 1964. Testing revealed that he had an aptitude for medicine, so he was sent to courses in anatomy and physiology and then on to medical lab courses. He served as a medical lab specialist for four years in Omaha, Nebraska.

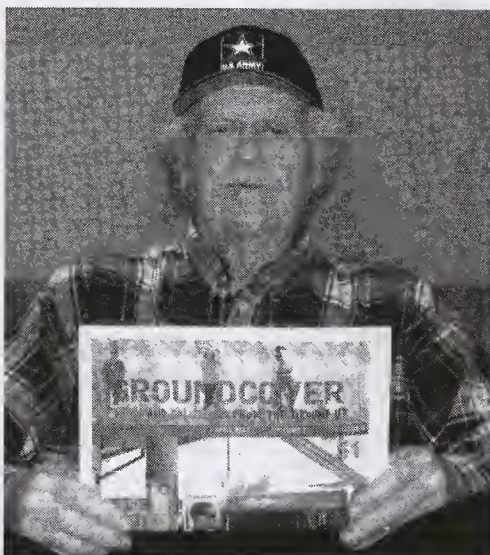
Returning to Roseville to care for his ailing mother, Hal worked in hematology at Harper Hospital while attending Macomb Community College in pursuit of his Associates Degree. He subsequently took a nine-month leave from the hospital and returned to EKU, but had to get back to Harper Hospital before he could complete his degree program.

While working security at Selfridge Air Force Base, he felt the military calling to him again. The Air Force deemed him too old at 28 but the Army was happy to take him and station him in Germany, where he was able to continue his lifelong passion for playing baseball.

Hal played first base for the fast-pitch European Army team runner-up, recalling his glory days of winning the fireman's baseball league championship in 1961.

They once flew to Mannheim in a helicopter for a match. A major came running to the helipad behind the diamond as they landed, erect and ready to greet a general. He was not pleased to see only men in baseball uniforms!

Hal left the service in 1980 to take a ministry class from the Power of Abundant Living. He then led in-home fellowship meetings, nurturing a passion that still burns. He worked in private labs for doctors until he turned in a doctor for ordering unnecessary



Hal Klenk sells Groundcover to inform the community about homelessness.

tests for Medicare patients and was fired. Soured on the medical field, he then worked odd jobs, drove a cab, and ultimately worked security for Pinkerton for ten years, living with and caring for his aged mother, who was suffering from dementia for the

last five of those years.

When his mother died in 2000 and the family decided to sell her home, the stress led to a brief hospital stay for Hal. He was released to the New Day Baptist Shelter in Detroit, a place he was thankful to leave when an Army buddy offered him a place to stay in Saline. They both worked as drivers for Domino's and for Airlines Parking until the September 11 tragedy greatly curtailed air travel and led to their being laid off.

The Domino's job was insufficient to support him, so Hal, newly diagnosed with diabetes, filed for a non-service military pension. That income allowed him to move into an efficiency apartment at the YMCA

located across from the downtown library in Ann Arbor. Forced at age 62 to look for an apartment at market-rate when the YMCA was demolished, he filed for early Social Security then learned that he could get that or his military pension, but not both. Neither was sufficient to finance living in an apartment and paying other ordinary expenses.

He has been labeled by the Veterans Administration (VA) as "chronically homeless" for the past 10 years and put on the list for a Section 8 voucher. In the meantime, he lives at the Staples Center where the VA has rooms set aside for veterans for up to two years while they await permanent housing.

A big music fan, Hal sings in the church choir and hopes to someday learn to read music and play an instrument. He has a vision of a new and used non-profit car dealership run by veterans that would sell cars to vets at just above list price. For himself, he would like to be an ordained minister and work full-time, perhaps for the Methodists. He plans to soon join Toastmasters to improve his public speaking.

We are proud to salute Hal in our Memorial Day issue and support him in selling Groundcover.

May Calendar

May 4 — Midnight Madness. Sales and late hours in downtown Ann Arbor. Music and dancing 7 - 9 p.m. on Main St.

May 5 — Growing Hope Center Grand Opening, 1 - 4 p.m. 922 W. Michigan Ave., Ypsilanti.

May 6 — Water Hill Music Fest, 2 - 6 p.m. Neighborhood musicians perform on their lawns or porches. Northwest fringe of Ann Arbor. See www.waterhill.org for more information. Free.

May 12 — Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive. Leave a bag of food by your mailbox and your mail carrier will take it to Food Gatherers when your mail is delivered.

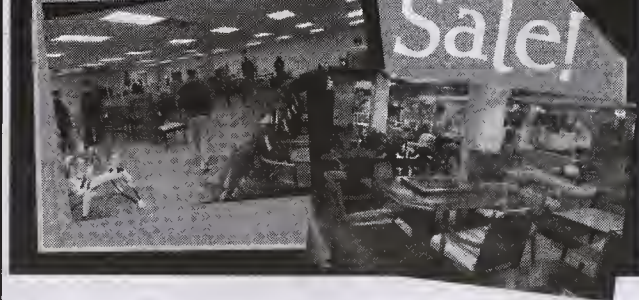
May 12 — Ypsilanti Garden Fair, 10 a.m. - 6 p.m. Demonstrations, local foods, plant sales, fun for kids. Michigan Ave., Ypsilanti.

May 20 — A Sister's Call. A movie about the struggle to bring home a brother suffering from paranoid schizophrenia who has been homeless for the past 20 years. Introduction and reception 5 p.m., film at 6 p.m. followed by a Q&A with the director, Rebecca Schaper. University Of Michigan Depression Center Auditorium, 4250 Plymouth Rd., Ann Arbor. Tickets \$10, \$2 if limited income.

May 20 — Circle of Art, 12 - 5 p.m. Art silent auction, all proceeds to Food Gatherers. Saline Picture Frame Company, 7641 North Ann Arbor St., Saline.

May 22 — Groundcover volunteer meeting, 7 p.m., Gallery Room, Bethlehem United Church of Christ, 423 S. 4th Ave., Ann Arbor.

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Chickens in the neighborhoods

by Lee Alexander
Groundcover Editor

Locavore [loh-kuh-vawr] **noun**

— a person whose diet consists only or principally of locally grown or produced food. —Oxford American Dictionary

An anecdotal measure of the interest in self-sufficiency and sustainability in Washtenaw County is the increasing popularity of raising hens in urban communities. Ann Arbor passed an ordinance in 2008, with little opposition, allowing backyard chickens. The following year, the City of Ypsilanti tagged along.

Ypsilanti Township is currently crafting their ordinance and Chelsea's backyard birds recently got the nod, legalized effective April 25. A group of advocates challenging Scio Township's prohibition is organizing. It's unclear if they'll meet resistance or whether the township governance will move forward propelled by common sense and the momentum of growing popularity.

Rick Richter helped organize Ann Arbor's initial effort and has offered advice to other communities working toward similar measures. He said that once communities are properly educated, misconceptions dissolve and the reality is that, for the most part, raising a small flock of chickens is



A small flock of backyard hens can keep a family supplied with fresh eggs.

comparable to responsibly caring for other common household pets such as cats or dogs. "The big difference," he said, "is that chickens give you breakfast; dogs or cats don't."

Richter was drawn to the idea because he thought it would be a healthy experience for his young daughter. Several years ago, before moving downtown and starting his family, he'd raised birds and felt like it carried valuable lessons he wanted to share with her.

"My daughter was doing 4-H," he said, "and so for us it was kind of the 4-H thing. We wanted her to get involved with the animals. Having chickens close was just a simple thing. It was getting

our daughter closer to her food source, as well as us."

"Now it's part of our lives," Richter said. "Frankly, I can't think of living without having a couple chickens in the backyard. It just seems like a natural thing to have around. They're not hard to take care of. I think most people get very intimidated because they think, 'oh, it's a farm animal,' or it's 'livestock.' Having a couple chickens around, they take care of themselves."

Richter's henhouse is typical of a city coop. He built it to be relatively predator-proof. Communities permitting birds typically follow a pattern of laws restricting the numbers and outlining shelter construction as well as how feed is stored. Cities nearly always prohibit roosters. Ann Arbor added the condition that adjacent neighbors can't be opposed to the chickens, although Richter said he doesn't think that's been an issue in Ann Arbor yet.

This isn't always true, though. Ypsilanti Township's ordinance was thrown into question after a young couple's neighbor complained about their birds. Jaclyn Baublitz and her boyfriend were ticketed, summoned to court and at the end of March ordered to pay a \$100 fine. The Township Board of Trustees meeting in early April drew more than

40 chicken supporters. Baublitz and other organizers brought forward a proposal to update the guidelines. The Board said they favored the proposition in principle but needed time to shape details of a new ordinance.

Backyard chickens are a small gauge of the growing trend toward reconnecting consumers and the production of their food. But it's more than just a chic new trend. Belt-tightening is leading to fresher, healthier choices and we're seeing a bright spot developing in our economy. We all know fresh food is more wholesome. Financial considerations are forcing us to make better decisions.

The slow food movement is reminiscent of the victory gardens from the WWII era; a collective, we're-in-this-together approach to feeding ourselves and our neighbors. Creating community through food is again fashionable.

"People are seeing how expensive the cost of food is," Richter said. "Fundamentally there's just a shift. People recognize how expensive it is to ship food and they realize that realistically they can grow it or raise it in their backyard. Or we can get it from a local source; it just makes more sense. This is grassroots change."

Warming Center fundraiser great fun

by David KE Dodge

For the most part, my knowledge of the mini-cosmos of human phenomena, which is Ann Arbor, is constantly under gradual augmentation, with little facts being added to my mental collage as they slowly come to me. Every once in a while, a deluge of information comes as it did in the event described below.

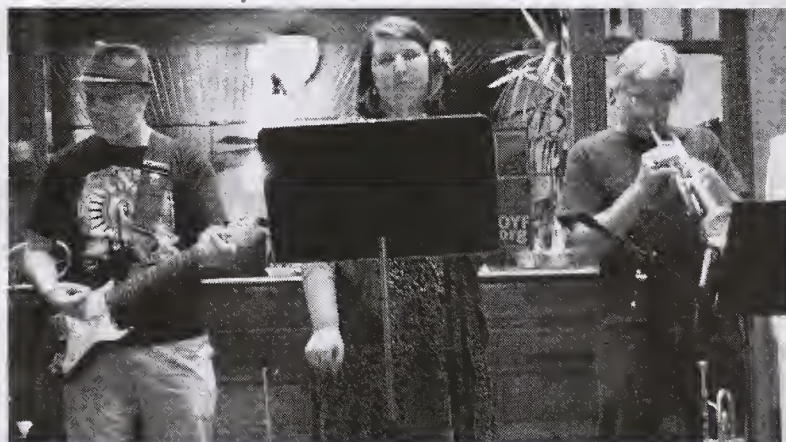
You may be familiar with most or all the names and terms in this report. If so, omission of details will not leave you disadvantaged. But if any name or term is unfamiliar to you, you may find yourself considerably rewarded by using the mentioned names as the start of an internet search that will leave you gratified with new knowledge. —DKED

On April 1, 2012, Imagine Warming Centers (IWC) held a public benefit for IWC, called "Imagine Spring Party," at Hathaway's Hideaway in downtown Ann Arbor. It was a party that couldn't wait to start, and didn't want to quit.

Jazz was performed by an impressively capable band called Five Miles More.

The house was packed by the time the party formally started, and local talents began alternately reading their own writings or playing and singing their own compositions punctuated by a jazz-filled intermission. The party was brought to a close by more jazz from Five Miles More, with a sendoff of "Bye, Bye, Blackbird."

Healthy snacks were brought by the sponsors of the party, and Sava's and People's Food Co-op also kindly provided trays of delicious food. And a good time was had by all.



Photos: Hathaway's Hideaway hosted Five Miles More and local poets and musicians to raise funds for Imagine Warming Centers.

Washtenaw Food Hub

continued from page 6

"I think it's really cool. I'm so glad there are people out there like Richard Andres and Deb Lentz who have had the level of success as diversified, organic vegetable farmers that they have a vision of what's next and are in a position to make the Food Hub happen," commented Jeff McCabe, Selma Café co-founder.

One local brokerage company, Lunasa, will move to the food hub on May 8. Lunasa is a web-based broker that matches food-conscious consumers with goods from scrupulous producers. Every two weeks, consumer members can order and purchase exactly how much they want of any item listed by member farmers and food processors for that period. All suppliers are screened and visited by co-founder Jane Pacheko, who makes sure they are using as many Michigan-grown products as possible and operating in an ethical and sustainable manner.

"I'm hoping that the food hub will increase my Lunasa sales, especially this time of year when we sell at the bigger markets," commented Joan Ernst of Ernst Farm who sells ethically raised meat products. "Lunasa has helped our sales, especially in the winter."

Lunasa is a great time saver for people committed to buying wholesome, local food who may be overwhelmed by the quantities of seasonal vegetables in a community supported agriculture (CSA) share box or want to purchase even more local goods.

"When we moved to Chelsea from the Denver area, I found myself driving all over Michigan to get essentials that were locally sourced," Pacheko said, "even with a CSA share, a market

buying club, a cow-share and shopping at the Farmer's Market."

Having buyers and sellers exchanging goods at the food hub will allow non-members a chance to see the program in action and decide if they want to pony up the \$40 membership fee. Occasionally, Lunasa hosts open house events where all of the producers not only sell product during the online shopping window, but they also set up tables the day of market and sell extra goods to the general public as well as Lunasa customers who either did not pre-order or are adding to their purchase. Upcoming Open House dates include May 8 and a gala celebrating the move to the food hub on June 26.

Located at 4175 Whitmore Lake road just north of M-14 and the Huron River, the Washtenaw Food Hub is 16 acres surrounded by a greenbelt, ensuring an enduring rural setting. McCabe and others are excited by its proximity to town and that it is accessible by bicycle.

McCabe is leasing barn storage space for supplies for his newly formed hoop house business, Nifty Hoops. McCabe sees the food hub as more of a producers' co-op that will facilitate them scaling up elegantly to capture more of the billion dollars county residents spend on food. By taking 10 percent of the market, food production would become a major, stable \$100 million local industry and employer, worthy of tax incentives.

Nearby is the Tilian Farm Development Center Incubator Program. They facilitate new farm business development in the Washtenaw County food shed by giving new farmers a start on Tilian Farm land with access

to their equipment and mentorship for two years. Some of their farmers have expressed interest in storing and processing their produce in the food hub.

While there is not much tillable land at the food hub, there will be some small scale farming that will eventually include u-pick vegetables. For now, only Evan Dayringer, who previously worked at Frog Holler and Tantré Farm, is gardening at the Washtenaw Food Hub.

"We should look at what Michigan can do and use our climate rather than trying to recreate California," Andres said. "We can grow 20 tons of cabbage on one acre versus only one ton of fresh vegetables on an acre under plastic."

Andres expects the storage and distribution facilities to be developed and used first, as the existing facilities are best suited to these purposes. Tantré Farm will move its twice-a-week CSA distributions there this summer and they look forward to using the heated store building for winter distributions. Large coolers will be brought in for storing the vegetables best suited to Michigan, like cabbage and beets. Heat from the coolers will be harnessed to dry other foods, such as beans. Community events and workshops on slow food preparation will be hosted at the food hub as well as a harvest holiday celebration in late September.

Once approval is received from Ann Arbor Township, work on a processing area - much like a commercial kitchen - will begin. This will be a USDA-inspected facility where produce will be washed, cut, and packaged. Andres envisions interesting vegetable combinations featuring kale, celery

root, carrots, beets and cabbage.

Food Gatherers has expressed interest in making and storing compost at the food hub, which completes the circle of returning food waste to the land as compost. They will also receive regular donations of fresh produce from the growers.

A recent tour visitor noted that the farm once housed an equipment repair facility and wondered if that was in the food hub's future. Andres responded that the food hub supports farmers and farmers have equipment that breaks down and needs repair. Since the food hub has a building well suited to that purpose, it could be used that way.

"There are all kinds of possibilities," said Andres. "Right now we are just putting our roots out."

Most of the Ann Arbor Farmer's Market growers are cautiously supportive of the Washtenaw Food Hub but not yet fully clear about how they might be part of it. Karlene Goetz from the Goetz Greenhouse in Riga attended an open house about the Washtenaw Food Hub, but is looking for more focus before jumping in. She tried selling through Lunasa but found she was spending too much on transportation for it to be cost-effective, given their location. She fears the same might be true for the food hub. The Market itself supports the food hub concept and joined the People's Food Co-op in promoting the appearance of Joel Salatin at the food hub last month to speak about the local food infrastructure.

"I think anything that is good for local growers is good for all of us who have a demand for local food," commented Co-op manager Kevin Sharp.

Cryptoquote Solution

"Unemployment is capitalism's way of getting you to plant a garden."

—Orson Scott Card

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Putting words on the fences: an interview with Lambchop, fence artist

by Carolyn Lusch
Groundcover Contributor

If you've walked, biked, or driven through Ann Arbor recently, you may have noticed certain things popping up on the fences. It may be a construction site, an abandoned lot, or a railroad barrier, and suddenly it has something to say. "Look around," "remember this," "play regardless," "proceed" – these are only some of the words that an artist, known on the streets as Lambchop, has painstakingly woven into the fence links.

I was fortunate enough to have an interview with Lambchop, whom I encountered putting up some art. I was curious to discover what exactly is behind this outbreak of words, and to share it with our Groundcover readers.

Q: So, tell me about your project and the inspiration for your project.

A: I'm really interested in what relationships happen between people and graphics and people and objects. I've kind of been working on themes of power, and how objects empower their users.

I was thinking about typography and thinking about pixels and non-spaces, because fences create spaces but they aren't really spaces in and of themselves, and so I was thinking about how do you change that, and what kinds of repercussions does that have, or what questions do people ask.

Q: And then, what happened? What sorts of questions did people ask, or what happened when people interacted with it?

A: You know, actually, it kind of took off in a direction I wasn't really expecting. Because at first I thought it was going to be these really lovely kind of phrases. And then I started doing kind of ambiguous phrases, and I started with "play regardless," and people would stop me and ask, play regardless of what? And so I became more interested in the questions that people were left with, you know, in response to these kinds of words.

Q: Land in cities is a huge issue of power, and these are abandoned lots



"get there" is at Hoover Ave., between Division St. & Greene St., next to the train-tracks. "remember this" spent its short life at the corner of Maiden Lane and Plymouth Rd. Photos by Lambchop.

that are probably owned by someone, but no one really knows who, and they're private. Can you talk a little bit about how you're addressing power?

A: I mean it wasn't entirely intentional to think about who's owning this land. This kind of falls into the power structure that's evident in graffiti. I mean there's tons of variations on what graffiti is about, what tagging is about: is it hostility at the city that has been hostile to them; what is that power dynamic? And for me it wasn't like, you know, "screw the man." Wheat pasting is cool, and spray paint is cool, and those are all really interesting methods of saying what you need to say in a public place. But I really didn't want to ruin someone else's property. I really wanted it to be present, but not necessarily permanent. I respect that this might be someone else's property, but what of the space, what of this interaction? They don't own that. That interaction belongs to the people who are part of the interaction.

Q: It's interesting that what makes it non-destructive is that it's not permanent, and we saw that with the one that was taken down very promptly – it's kind of sad, but I guess that's sort of the point – that it's temporary.

A: Yeah. I kind of like that it has this transient quality to it. There are a few that are up, and have been up, and

"remember this" was up and then taken down about two days after. Which, at first, I was kind of like, oh man, that's a bummer. But then I was like, no, this totally fits. You know, remember this and then it's gone! I thought that was really interesting, too, that someone could take it down, that it was able to be removed. Someone was either upset or bothered, or felt like their space had been invaded, so they took the time to remove it.

Q: What's the one you put up on Hoover Avenue?

That one says "get there." And it's quite nice because it's on the intersection where the train tracks meet Hoover, so there's this dynamic, because cars have to stop when the train is going. And I thought "get there" was kind of nice because "get there" is both – it's kind of affirmative, and positive, but then, where is someone getting to? Sometimes you ask yourself that, and you decide, I don't have a clue! What am I becoming, where am I going?

And there is something interesting about the fact that it has a front and a back. You can see it from behind, and it's backwards text, which is a little different because you don't normally see backwards text. And I kind of liked it facing inwards, towards the empty lot, almost as a way to say: this is an empty lot, this is a contaminated space – apparently there used to be a gas station

there – but okay, so, "play regardless." Is it about, we're going to have fun in this space that isn't supposed to be habitable or fun? So I liked the idea of putting it in there, because it kind of reflected on the space itself.

Q: Are there other things that are going to happen in this project?

Yes, indeed. This is just the beginning, this is something that just kind of happened. It's one of those things that you start doing and then you're like, oh, this is actually kind of cool. And then you keep doing it. So, I'm interested in experimenting with different materials. I actually just bought about a thousand feet of caution tape, which I'm really excited to use, because caution tape has such a strong social affiliation of like, do not go, do not cross, this is dangerous...

So I'm right now not really sure where it's going to go, you know. It's going to go somewhere. And I'm interested in: how does the community react? Could the community be involved? What materials affect the relationship between the people and the fences? So it's really up in the air right now; I'm not really sure, but I'm really excited about it.

I just want to thank people for being curious, and to tell them to look for more. Because it is coming. It's going to happen.

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Three Months/Three Issues: 15% off
Six Months/Six Issues: 25% off
Full Year/Twelve Issues: 35% off
Additional 20% off ads with coupons